



One Queer Fat Gimp Response
to Ableism & Fatphobia
in Queer Communities.

Here's one more contribution to the discussions currently swirling around accessibility & ableism & Queeruption 10, being held here on Coast Salish Territory, August 2007. This came about over a period of about a month leading up to Q10, though a couple things here are older than that. Some I posted on the Q10 listserve thing, or livejournal or myspace or in other online groups or whatever & some of these things i've already said in discussions about / around Q10. i'm a repeater, so bear with me? there's some back and forth here (sometimes you gotta go round in a couple circles before getting to the point). Um. Also, im really blunt, not interested in making you guess how i feel about this stuff. While im a terrifically agreeable person in general (and very happily so, after spending all of my teens & 20's being a boorish ass-hat), my take on this stuff is clear. Im not frustrated by ableism. Allies can be frustrated.

Im angry. Angry that this shit is still happening. Every day. All day. And it's my right to express that anger (& sadness & dreams for something different) in the best and most respectful way i know how. It's my right.

Some things (like now there is more info online about the site, including some pics and a map of the land) have changed since writing & that's very cool. Some stuff hasn't changed & well i suppose things can take a while sometimes. Hopefully the discussions & maybe even this unfortunately-not-very-cutesy zine gets people talking, whether you like or agree with what i have to say or not. Whatever yer take on it, be part of creating actual change in our communities. Challenge yourselves on this stuff like you try to on other kinds of things. Y'know, the kinds of things "radical" queer communities talk so much about working on.

Just a Note: This is brought to you by **one** white queer fat tranny gimp. not ALL white queer fat tranny gimps. not even 2 white queer fat tranny gimps. Just the one. i don't speak for anyone but my lonesome, & don't want folks speaking for me either. i know certain terms are offensive to some folks, or don't describe their experiences or identities, which is perfectly great. i take responsibility for these words, in writing or otherwise. i don't claim to know everything about ableism or fatphobia & don't think everyone else should know either. And i don't believe that these two things are all that's fucked up in our communities, or with Queeruption. I'm speaking from my own experiences, with my own biases and limitations and dreams. There aren't any simple answers. This stuff is not easy.

And! i think of ableism beyond a lack of wheelchair access, beyond access period. Inaccessibility is ONE of the results of an ableist society, but certainly not the only one. Also, ableism affects people who may or may not or who YOU may or may not identify as gimps disabled/ crimps/ etc. For example it directly impacts those fatfolks who don't fit as neatly as some of us into skinny-centred spaces & and concepts of "accessible". Ableism divides our communities literally (as opposed to this other division that happens when folks speak out about it *sigh*), into those who fit & those who don't & then makes judgments & decisions based on who fits, FOR those who can't...if they're even considered. There's nothing radical about allowing this kind of power dynamic to continue to poison our communities. No more so than a bunch of white kids getting together & talking about how divisive those folks are who constantly bring up the blatant & not so blatant racism in "our" communities. Or those pecky trannies. Ooooooh shit! Don't even get me started on them!

Bottom line: You don't want to see drooling, speech-impaired, twitching, colostomy-bag-wearing retards at yer events. & you don't want to see 3, 4, 5, 6 hundred pound smelly, lazy, world-devouring, meat-eating fatties crashing yer vegan petuncks & breaking up yer chairs & the whole skinny, whiskey-drinkin', tralahoppin' vibe you got goin' on.

That's fundamentally what its all about folks. Seriously. i know that's hard to swallow (hehheh), but it's the reality at its most base. You don't want us to drool on you & eat all yer food. So just fess up, to yourselves, in one of those quiet reflective epiphanous moments would you? Then we can all continue on with the business of creating a community that actually means something when it talks about anti-oppression & community-building & autonomy & all that excellent stuff.

* * *

So i've been writing & thinking a longass time about ableism in the queer community & about our awesome capacity to learn shit & change & be amazing to each other. Speaking out & organizing stuff too (despite my years-old rep of not being able to organize my way out of a wet paper bag). Making much needed changes along the way & fucking up & getting better & here i am again calling out ableism in the queer community. Been called out as dividing the queer community (holy powerful skills, Batman!), creating drama & just generally being a negative nelly ("Nelly"? Absolutely. Negative? Sometimes, but mostly I'm more interested in finding ways of making things work, not ~~just only~~ talking about how they don't--even though that's a perfectly necessary part & i don't actually consider that "negative"...anyways...i'm rambling) for bringing up issues around INaccessibility & ableism in the queer community. & well i suppose that's ok. It's sort of true anyways. & that's really sad. It's sad that talking about & acting on & actively working to change the fact that certain folks are routinely left out of "our" community is considered divisive & negative. Granted, i haven't been called

"dramatic" (to my face anyways) ever since i started being seen as a "dude" a few years ago (regardless the fact i don't ID that way). Seems that nasty little sexist slag is still reserved for women who speak out about...well...pretty well anything really, ableism & fatphobia being no exception. Some shit never changes i suppose. But it certainly can & must change. That's where y'all come in! That's where people like me come in! That's where we eventually get together, you & i, & people like & unlike us, & kick shit up!

But you'll have to get through yer fear first & for that, my friends, you're entirely on yer own.

This isn't about calling out just Queeruption 10, or Queeruption in general, becuz this stuff is part of literally every corner of our queer communities; it's just one opportunity among many to bring this stuff up; in fact a perfect one, Q10 apparently being about changing & creating & challenging ourselves, our various communities; coming together to exchange ideas & experiences. It couldn't have gone unnoticed by Q10ers that certain gimps & fatties would be entirely excluded from these happenings & in fact it **didn't** escape at least the collective, as they've said access has "been on their radar" from the very start.

Well after almost a year of organizing, one month away from the event, & after many attempts to engage with them about it, the collective called a community meeting about accessibility. This meeting included questions from organizers like: "What resources would you suggest for finding out where to start, like what are the basics of making an event accessible?" (at least that's honest y'know? & that's something to work from), & "Why don't disabled people just contact Q10 to let us know what they[sic] need?" (um...), & comments like "We can't make it 100% accessible to 100% of people, it's just not possible" (which i actually haven't heard anyone asking for), & "We're only a few people, we don't have any time or energy left. It's

a month away & we're already burnt out". Folks. This is Queeruption **TEN**, not one or two. Come on now. In **NINE** Queeruptions there's never been discussions about **IN**accessibility? Ableism? Fatphobia? For **reals**?? Cuz if that's true, that says something entirely different about these gatherings. i've never been & honestly never paid a whole lot of attention to Queeruption cuz there was never the the possibility of taking part til now, just like lots of people. i personally want to believe that these things have come up & there have been thoughtful creative difficult lively discussions that resulted in some expanded understanding, some new ways of looking at things, some new ways of organizing. Is this naive? Totally wrong? Completely out of touch? Have these kinds of discussions happened around racism? Sexism? Transphobia? No? Yes? I wonder for sure.

My main ish, if you will, is that Q10 collective members are using (i.e. stealing) the experiences & realities of people affected by ableism in their propaganda (specifically the Q10 zine) as a means of propping up this idea that it's all about building community, all the while not really in any tangible ways taking access seriously (when you're on this side of the fence, things look decidedly different) & i think that's some seriously hypocritical bullshit.

i want to offer **alternatives**, to make suggestions on what could be and have been done differently & to demand accountability from a community (not just one collective) that insists on including gimps & fatties on paper but not in reality. i'm tired of being used, just like so many other folks have been & continue to be used, by self-described radicals seeking to be...well...radical, without having to do the work necessary to make that happen for real. so i'm calling them out. i'm calling the queer community out. i seriously want and need this shit to change. & kind of resent the implication (and the outright callout) that bringing this stuff up is somehow not active, not involved, not creative,

not useful or "productive", armchair activism ad nauseum (which i've always thought of as being a totally fucked up ableist slag--not everyone can be out there kicking shit up, turning over mailboxes & marching down the street & blowing shit up...it takes aaaaall kinds to make shit happen) i.e. not worth. while. We all have stuff to bring to our communities. i just want ~~more~~ people to have the opportunity to do that, cuz we need to hear and see and feel all kinds of things in all kinds of ways, ways we maybe never even thought of before, to learn. Not limited by ableism and fatphobia any more than by racism, classism, transphobia, sexism, ageism, or speciesism, or any other limiting hurtful anti-community way of thinking/living.

So there.

* * *

Upon returning home from the Queerception 18 "accessibility" discussion

June 30th 2007 i'm astounded to have come into this space & hear this stuff. they've been organizing this thing for about a year & its with **one month left** to go that they call a community discussion about accessibility (not ableism mind you) & wonder why its stressful for them! No bloody wonder!

some of these things will be wheelchair accessible. most won't, in all honesty. At this point they have no locations booked, very little or possibly no money earmarked for access (though they apparently do have enough \$ to envision renting a several thousand square foot warehouse...hmmm), no skills related to the safe and timely construction of accessibility aids, & not even the most basic understanding of what accessibility looks like (yes, collective members speak only for themselves, but when it was expressed by a member that they don't know how to make such an event accessible, what are the basics, no one else suggested they knew otherwise).

paternalism & inaccessibility are 2 effects of the bigger problem of ableism. None of that has been addressed. No addressing the way that ableism is different here on Coast Salish Territory, in this particular context, than it is in other places around the world. No sense of it at all.

while you can learn about making beer, or about getting & giving sexual consent, so far there isn't one single workshop planned during Q10 that talks about ableism or fatphobia & that's a fuckin shame. The response from collective members? "Make it yourself". Um. If people **CAN'T GET TO THE SPACE IT'S HAPPENING IN**, how the fuck can they "do it themselves"?

Sigh. This shit cuts so deeply people can't even see it for what it is.

* * *



is this obvious enough?

Finally! Ableism Pays Off! I've created a new position for myself: Gimp Authority

Services include, but are certainly not limited to:

- coming up with a list of accessible & cheap (preferably free!) spaces in which you can hold events!

- volunteering my time, energy & resources to single-handedly organise access for yer events!

- offering workshops/info sessions on access!

- coddling ableist "allies" who cant/wont get their shit together regarding the INaccessible events they insist on holding!

- finding just the right words to ensure education, not alienation (we're all just doing "what we can", after all, right? we all just "know what we know")!

- providing you with a Gimp-For-a-Day™ at events, as a means of propping up yer assertion that yer events really are accessible!

- enduring a barrage of ableist comments / actions / assumptions, & responding kindly, understandingly, not defensively or - gasp! - angrily!

- providing resources (written, audio, Brailled, digital, in-person, etc) wherever & whenever necessary, free of charge!

- being available for comment on access issues at any time day or night, on the street, in my home, regardless of what else i might be engaged in like...y'know...a life!

- being the Human Face of Ableism™!

- not demanding accountability or transparency!
- not sharing personal stories around access!
- only sharing personal stories around access!
- maintaining a suitable distance from the organising core, where i might have some actual say in what comes of all the work!
- and—above all, remaining a positive (i.e. nice, apologetic, non-confrontational, etc.) force for change in "our" communities!

i charge by the hour, & by the page (not the book).
 If you feel yer organisation could benefit from these (and other) services, contact me:
 1-800-suck-my-gimped-ass

* * *

Calling Out Ableism in Queer & Trans Spaces

i'm (once again...yawn) going to boycott & call out more queer/trans events that are INaccessible. This includes calling out & ultimately boycotting Queeruption 10, here on Coast Salish Territory this summer. It includes having called out & ultimately boycotting BENT once-monthly queer dances held in INaccessible space. This includes calling out & ultimately boycotting (when applicable) kinky public parties i can think of here in town over "Pride" (bahhah!) week, & beyond.

despite the fact that i can generally get up a few stairs. [because it's NOT ABOUT ME!]

despite the fact that i know money is tight or non-existent & we're just doing what we can do in queer/trans communities. [because i'm broke too-- and i mean actually broke, & yet somehow i manage to do shit in accessible spaces. & because for some

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This is What Access Looks Like...

~~gimping folks access~~

(Some) Enabled folks talk about wanting gimps & fatties to come out to events, especially to participate in discussions around in/accessibility & how that can be changed; but don't do the groundwork to get people there, from the beginning, or provide people the opportunity to do it themselves. they make it impossible for us to connect one on one, face to face, over time -- to be part of this community -- & then complain when we dont show up when YOU decide (pretty well always because gimps have brought up the obvious) to do some work around access.

This is key: you hold yer fun, sexy, silly community events in INaccessible spaces & expect us to show up in droves to boring endless discussions about INaccessibility, which we live every single day, like that's all we want to talk about, or all we have to offer & then you wonder why some of us get so fricken pissed off & don't show up.

this isnt about being "good people", or knowing all the answers without having to even ask the questions. it's about building the kind of community that really is a community & not just a clique. if what you want is to build community, then im totally in & come to it with ideas, questions, & joy.

Start by:

- ➡ holding meetings & events at w/c accessible spaces
- ➡ being transparent with the process by sharing notes or general ideas & action items from meetings
- ➡ posting meeting times/dates/locations enough ahead of time that folks can arrange transport (it's not always a simple matter of hopping on the bus or biking down to a meeting space. gimps often need more time to arrange rides, or community disabled buses like HandiDart & a medical excuse that seems reasonable for them to even book it, or to just walk from home sometimes takes longer yknow? to arrange attending these meetings/events around possible therapy & homecare times, or around when an attendant is available, etc) & childcare (having bucks available for this is awesome, but it also requires parents/caregivers arranging the actual childcare ahead of time). i.e. KNOCK IT OFF WITH THE CLOAK-AND-DAGGER BULLSHIT ALREADY! You think the cops aren't already here?
- ➡ keeping accessibility on the table at all times (and not just as a fricken pretty plastic centrepiece that gathers dust and never changes). & don't treat it as a side-issue or as diverting from the "topic at hand" (doesn't that sound terribly familiar?)
- ➡ participating in workshops, reading circles, etc., specifically around ableism (not just access, because that's not all that needs work here).

- ➡ seeking out & taking part in community events/groups/etc that are actually connected to disabled folks
- ➡ posting call-outs to folks for ideas on good readings/tapes/websites on ableism & access issues
- ➡ looking around within queer/trans communities for folks who already put on workshops on ableism
- ➡ don't assume all gimps want to do is talk about yer issues around access & ableism, including coming out to meetings you organize to talk about it. Some of us just want to get laid & have a good time in safe queer spaces (outrageous you say!), just like you.

Do you want to be part of changing shit in a radical way, or don't you? if you don't, then take all yer talk of "ableism" & "disabled folks" out of yer goddamn propaganda. Otherwise, make radical change in our communities!

Some More Helpful Hints on Ableism, Access & Communication in Radical™ Communities

DO NOT call "community" events in INaccessible spaces.

DO NOT only hold accessible events when you want to talk about access.

DO NOT call out gimps as hypocrites for attending INaccessible events.

DO NOT assume you (or i!) know everything about access.

DO NOT forget that physical accessibility affects a lot of people. Not just those of us who identify as gimps, or who you identify as gimps.

BE PREPARED to get called out & thanked. Or not (no brownie points or back-patting).

BE PREPARED to make some changes to yer non-negotiables, to yer bottom-lines & potentially to yer profits/pocketbooks: accessibility costs time, money & energy. If you make it a priority early on you wont have to suffer the ongoing costs of INaccessibility, likely wont end up drained & defensive because you've left it too late in the game & youre scrambling to get it together, & will be part of creating, maintaining & expanding our awesome communities.

DO NOT lie about or otherwise historically revise yer relationship with ableism. It's embarrassing to watch. It just makes you look silly. Contrary to the popular myth in many of our communities, there's no shame in not knowing. But most importantly this lying & revisionism presupposes that the folks who are speaking with you about ableism & access are somehow too stupid to realize you're bullshitting them..holy reinforcing ableism, Batman!

DO NOT shut down communication across the board because you "need a break" from discussing access & ableism. Gimps & fatties & others don't have the luxury of walking away. Neither should you. At least acknowledge that it's yer privilege that allows it.

DO NOT, in defensiveness, turn discussions of ableism & access into personality pissing contests (ie. The old "but-im-a-good-person" gambit, or the "youre-not-calling-me-out-on-my-shit-in-the-right-way" manoeuvre). This isn't about you. Or me. Its about what we want for our communities, who we see as being part of those communities & how we can work together to be part of making it all happen. And frankly, if we cant call each other out as well as cheer each other on, what the fuck kind of community is it we're building?

within the dis/ability rights movement, this idea is often promoted that we can gain power or access without causing others to suffer a loss. this leads folks to conclude that those opposed to dis/ability rights are mistaken & /or uneducated. but other movements have learned firsthand that significant progress brings a reaction from the dominant culture, & when you cut into centuries of privilege, that has everything to do with winning & losing.

Ableism in Queer/Trans Communities: Some Questions for Y'all Fabulous Folk

to ENabled queer & trans folks(not making any assumptions about who that might be, or how you personally identify) & allies, here are some honest questions for you

* * * * *

do you feel like you have an understanding of what ableism is? What is ableism to you?

do you feel it's too overwhelming to talk about ableism & access?

do you feel ill-equipped to talk openly with other folks about ableism?

do you feel alone, isolated, embarrassed, or "like a nag" when you address ableism within a predominantly (or entirely) ENabled group?

do you know what ENabled guilt is?

do you feel that ENabled guilt gets in the way of creating change around ableism?

what role, if any, do you see the oppression hierarchy (i.e. "i'm more oppressed than you", & "i

can't be oppressing you because i'm queer/trans".
etc) playing in discussions (or the absence of
them) about ableism within queer & trans spaces?

is there anything you've thought of that
might/would/could make the process (of talking
about ableism in our communities; of changing the
way we think about access; etc) possible (not
necessarily easier, just possible)?

what steps, if any, have you taken to put ableism
on the table at discussions/ organizing meetings/
house meetings/ etc? what kinds of feedback, if
any, did you receive for bringing it up?

are there instances where you've seen ableism
addressed & worked through in a group/ clique/
organization/ communal space, etc? what did that
look like? were disabled folks involved in the
process? what, if anything, would you have liked to
see done differently? what surprised you?

why do you attend queer & trans events that are
inaccessible?

what do you need to make different choices around
the inaccessible queer & trans events you currently
attend?

"i think i have an understanding of what
ableism is, but certainly not all the issues ... as an
enabled person there are a lot of things i will
have never even considered"

"it's certainly overwhelming to talk about ableism/
access, but i feel like it's my responsibility as
a thinking person to understand & engage in dialog"

"... i find myself wishing there were people doing
ableism 101 workshops in my area ... specific
knowledge would be waaaaay more helpful."

shouldn't access the spaces they choose to access. I know so many folks (myself included) who sometimes pull our gimped asses (or get lifted) up stairs, who endure chemically heavy environments, who hold our bladders all fricken night, who endure all kinds of ableist bullshit, because there is nothing else, nowhere else to find community. I while I certainly challenge myself to think more about these choices, I don't blame myself or others gimpe for choosing to go to inaccessible events. It doesn't mean we are hypocrites, it means we are desperate for community.

I blame ENABLED PEOPLE for forcing us to make these kinds of fucked up choices in the first place. I challenge ENABLED PEOPLE to think about it, to learn some shit about it & to act accordingly.

of these things, ACCESSIBLE SPACES were available for comparable rates & organizers CHOSE INaccessible ones, and for some of these events organizers are actually sitting on serious amounts of money yet doing zip to see accessible spaces.

despite allies' "best intentions" (because intention isn't worth SHIT, seriously, it's what you DO that counts, not what you thought you-wish-you-could-have-done-if-only-you-knew-more-or-better-or-had-more...)

despite the offers to carry me up the flight of stairs (which happens a lot, by the way, not just to me) (will you be carrying my friends too? & the gimps & fannies & don't happen to know? or just me, cuz, y'know, you like me or you think i'm cute? & will you be carrying all of us--and whatever shit we need to get around--to the inaccessible bathrooms & back too? Do you know what it is to drop someone down a flight of stairs? Do you know what the fuck you're doing?)

despite the fact that many of my friends are in there having a great time dancing away to great music in "queer" space (because i'm learning that friends make these kinds of choices all the time & it makes me sad that because we have so little available as queer/trans folk we're willing to leave out parts of our little communities including our friends.)

despite the fact that there is NOTHING else, NOWHERE else to go (not that you give a fuck where gimps--and our FOR REALS allies--go to have fun, eh? wait, we don't actually have fun do we?? we don't actually have hot kinky parvy sex do we? we don't actually DO that stuff do we??? shudder)

despite the fact that the "queer" collectives, some of the most creative folks & know-who-organize these events cant seem to get their shit

- not demanding accountability or transparency
- not sharing personal stories around access
- only sharing personal stories around access
- maintaining a suitable distance from the organising core, where I might have some actual say in what comes of all the work!
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for myself: **Gimp Authority**

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- providing you with a Gimp-For-a-Day™ at events, as a means of propping up yer assertion that yer events really are accessible!
- enduring a barrage of ableist comments, notions, assumptions, & responding kindly, understandingly, not defensively or (gasp!) awfully!
- providing resources (written, audio, Brailled, digital, in-person, etc) wherever & whenever necessary, free of charge!
- being available for comment on access issues at any time day or night, on the street, in my home, regardless of what else I might be engaged in (like y'know a life!)
- being the Human Face of Ableism™!

together to DO something about it. [because you
gimps are just ruining our fun]
despite the fact that I'd *love* to participate in
truly activist space, truly revolutionary shit,
life-changing, community-building stuff. [because
the space you're doing it in erases all of that,
every last fucking piece of it, every claim to it.]

Fuck you and your sitting on literally thousands of
dollars and doing fuck all about the Inaccessibil-
ity of your events (until of course, you decide you
net actually doing them anymore)

Fuck you and your sitting on hundreds of years of
organizing experience and yet refusing to apply it
to the gimps and fatties in any meaningful way.

Fuck you & yer bullshit "solidarity"
Fuck you & yer "radical queer" bullshit

R A D I C A L I S M F A T F R A N K I A S S

[BUT THERE IS HOPE! For just one example, how about
a dozen cheers for the folks who put together the
"Odd Ball" dances here in town at accessible space
EVERY TIME? They put together fabulously fun &
silly & NOT queer dances. You get in free if you
volunteer, & you get to REALLY be part of
community. That's what it's about. THAT is
radical.]

Radical is being an ally & refusing to support
unexamined Inaccessible events & instead working
together to find alternatives that include more and
more of us, not just a select privileged few.

Radical is understanding that when enough people
say "no fucking way will this shit happen any more"
that stuff finally stands a *chance* to change.
Radical is understanding yer impact & yer privilege
for what it is.

(and I want to be absolutely clear that nothing I'm
saying is about suggesting that queer/trans gimps

shouldn't access the spaces they choose to access
I know so many folks (myself included) who
sometimes pull out gimped asses (or get lifted) up
stairs, who endure chemically heavy environments,
who hold our bladders all fricken night, who endure
all kinds of ableist bullshit, because there is
nothing else, nowhere else to find community. I
while I certainly challenge myself to think more
about these choices, I don't blame myself or other
gimps for choosing to go to inaccessible events. It
doesn't mean we are hypocrites. It means we are
desperate for community.
I blame ENABLED PEOPLE for forcing us to make these
kinds of fucked up choices in the first place. I
challenge ENABLED PEOPLE to think about it, to
learn some shit about it. I to act accordingly.

"It's easy to dismiss people as "ZOMB PC!!!" which i feel happens a lot"

"i'm willfully putting myself in some serious debt to hone my nagging skills. Sometimes i fear i may not be representing the issues thoroughly enough, as i am also complicit in ableism as an enabled person."

"i DON'T KNOW WHAT ENABLED GUILT IS."

"i think this sort of thinking [the oppression hierarchy] gets used a lot. It's a tactic to access power within groups of people who generally feel disempowered. it's ultimately counter-productive & sometimes abusive."

* "VISIBILITY IS THE 1ST STEP TO MAKING CHANGES... BUT THIS OPENS UP A WHOLE OTHER CAN OF WORMS IN THAT VISIBILITY IS ACTUALLY THE HARDEST THING TO ACHIEVE WHEN THERE'S NO ACCESSIBILITY."

"i've personally boycotted events."

i attend INACCESSIBLE QUEER/TRANS EVENTS "because the community is so small, i often don't feel like i have a choice... my privilege allows me to not realize the event i've attended was inaccessible." "i can confidently say that the peer bffs i frequent/pride & other events i go to are accessible."

education to raising
"i NEED TO HAVE AN INCREASED AWARENESS OF INACCESSIBILITY"

☆ are you talking about this? ☆

in a world dominated by capital, try to recognize how dehumanizing & isolating alienation is. separation & isolation from the world are the central features of the process of alienation. it happens over a long period of time. it involves peoples everyday lives at home. school. the local market. work. between the sheets. communities. it's linked to those everyday things. the outcomes are hopelessness, rationalization of oppression & the inconceivability of power over yer own life. the majority of society constantly reminds us we're different. friendly curiosity [pats on the head, staring, pointing], overpoliteness ["oh, let me get that for you..."], outright discrimination ["we don't rent to people like you"]. often this shit is unintentional & casual, but it's exactly that matter-of-factness & indifference that most clearly shows a gimp their place.

[obscure oppression so you cant really tell what's going on. eliminate real identity. nihilism. conceal oppression from yourself.]

people don't feel this shit becuz they're "detached from reality", but becuz the realities of everyday life often provide little hope or meaning.

[this is a reasonable response to poverty & powerlessness, isolation & degradation.]

possibl hey you (that is, every single one of you who plan on or are considering coming here to Vancouver for Queeruptio10), wanna be a gimp + fatty ally *for real*? Here's how!

① **Demand access for all!** Ask organizers what is & isn't accessible, & why. Tell them it's unacceptable to you that so many people are being & have been shut out of this "community" gathering, & that unless ableism & access are taken seriously by the Q10 collective & supporters, neither you nor yer friends nor yer own collectives will support them.

② **Hold Q10 to *their* & *yer own* words!**

All from the Q10 Zine:

"[Queeruptio] is free, & aimed at radical queers of all races, ages, abilities sizes, genders & sexualities"

"...many other barriers exist which prevent queers of certain races, ages, abilities, sizes, genders & sexualities from feeling comfortable or welcome. Queeruptio aims to create a space that encourages all queers to feel comfortable & able to participate in all aspects of the gathering."

"Capitalism, racism, classism, patriarchy, body fascism sexism, ableism, heteronormatism, & speciesism are other examples of hierarchical power structures that anarchy opposes...We see Queeruptio as a direct challenge to the social, political, & economic control that is exerted over us."

As many of you know from yer own experiences, it gets really fucking tired seeing people once again use the struggles & experiences of gimps & fatties as tools (in print, no less! cheeky.) to prop up this bogus fake-ass poser anti-oppression hipster radical-speak.

③ Demand that accessibility information be posted on ALL Q10 events!

This includes fundraisers, info fairs, meetings, & other gatherings, **whether or not these events are accessible**. It's not currently always possible to make every event accessible, but it's certainly possible to be up front about it. Be part of creating a community where gimps & fatties & our allies can make informed decisions about the events we support, & a community where organizers take ableism & access seriously, not because it looks good on paper, but because we as a community understand ableism & fatphobia to be two of the power dynamics we want to tear down.

④ Don't go to Q10, but organize yer own accessible events in direct & conscious opposition (and/or addition) to Queerruption!

Folks who believe ableism & fatphobia play a role in keeping our communities locked in power struggles, the likes of which Q10 wants to fight, can be putting together our own accessible gatherings, with gimps & fatties being an integral part of the organizing process from the very start, that celebrate, anticipate, & honour ALL our communities, not just those few who can access them.

⑤ If you do still intend on coming, then use yer able-bodied-enough privilege to challenge the Q10 collective, all Queerrupters, and all queer communities.

Engage in education, actions, callouts, whatever, **SOMETHING!** Don't just come to get laid, drink & eat vegan food, under the stars and the auspices of doing something radically queer. Be a voice that demands change around the way our communities think & ACT about ableism (that we think about it at all; that we think about it as one of the first orders of business when we're organizing shit, not as a last-minute afterthought). Don't allow yourself to be silenced by those who'll surely attempt to make you feel like shit for making people "feel bad" for being encouraged to acknowledge & work through the ableism & fatphobia inherent in this "radical" community, in any meaningful way whatsoever.

ENabled folks are overwhelmingly mired in & frozen by unacknowledged guilt & you're likely not gonna be the one to pry them out of it, cuz you've got yer own work to do too. but every bit helps, especially when the folks who are directly affected by this are overwhelmingly SHUT OUT.

Begin to think of yourself differently: as **ENabled by an ableist system**, because that is what you are. ENabled by an ableist system. You arent on **this** side of ableism. You arent affected by it in the same way as gimps and fatties. You are privileged by your able body. No matter what that body is contained in, no matter what you call that body, what your or others' relationship with it is, you are not affected the same way by ableism. You might have a brother a lover a teacher a daughter who is affected by it. But you are not affected in the same way. It doesn't matter that "some of your best friends are disabled" (you wanna know how many times people have actually literally said that to me?), or that you "don't see disability" (another gem from the I'm ok youre ok pile.

Experience your ENabled body for what it is, & in this way, change your relationship with this community, with what you choose to support and to change.

**Use yer ENabled body in ways others have been
DISabled from doing!**

and remember that it isn't just Queeruption or any singular event or gathering of queers that needs to hear this stuff: it's all our communities, all our events. All of it! This is just one opportunity among many to talk about this stuff, share your ideas and experiences rage and joy!

Check this out for an example of why it's necessary to not leave this shit till the last minute, examples of some of the things that go into making things actually accessible. Not all of it will be applicable necessarily in the way it's worded here, but there are things to be learned when you adapt it to yer space. This isn't to say y'all need to do or would ever be in a position to do all this shit, obviously, but you need to be thinking about this stuff more fully. Making stuff more accessible ~~is~~ possible, if you make it a priority. Some folks, including other gimps & fatties, might have a problem with this list, for a variety of reasons, one of which is that it draws attention to need, & freaks people out that they're being asked to look at this stuff. It's just one more tool to use in understanding and changing shit.

In 1999, the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) at UBC conducted its first audit with Student Health Services. A team of DRC staff members conducted the audit and, in doing so, developed questionnaires in five areas which could be used by other campus units to conduct their own disability audit. These five areas are: staff training; publications; programming; technology; & building & pathways. [i've included just the last category].

This checklist is based on a number of different building codes & it attempts to give the minimum standards of accessibility. The Code involves the comparison of various aspects of the building against a list of values on a simple pass/fail basis. While the items on this checklist meet code, they do not necessarily work for all people with all disabilities.

A four-part scale of accessibility will be used in this plan - good (freely accessible), acceptable (accessible unaccompanied, but with difficulty), poor (accessible only with assistance) & unacceptable (inaccessible). The criteria for this functional model is harder to define because it takes into account the barriers experienced by

people who use the facility, rather than on dimensions alone.

This document does not include measures of that commitment. Instead, it covers a wide range of minimal access based in dimensions alone for people with disabilities including, mobility, vision, hearing, & learning.

Signage/Wayfinding Signage in a clearly visible location?●Highly visible with large, thick lettering?●Non-glare finish?●Letters & background high contrast?●Brailled?●Tactile?●Good height (5' above floor to centreline of sign)?●Can a person approach within 36" of sign without standing within door swing?●Room signage on latch side of door (nearest handle when door is closed)?●Plan of building at entrances?●Directional signage large & consistent (colour, height, placement)?

Parking Access parking within 200 feet of the building?●Are they well-signposted (upright & ground signage)?●Signage regarding the misuse of the spaces?●Are the spaces on level ground?●Is there a slip resistant surface?●Extra space designated to allow access to & from car (12' wide; 26' high)?●Do they allow easy & barrier-free access to the closest entrance?●Can the user avoid passing through traffic & behind parked cars?

Exterior Accessibility Outdoor paths in good condition (no roots, cracks, holes...)?●Marked with paint to indicate wheelchair accessible paths?●Outline path edges with high contrast paint?●Grate slots not parallel to traffic flow?●Grate slots no more than ½" wide?●Sidewalks, ramps & paths 36" wide?●5' level landing at top & bottom of ramps & at directional changes?●Temporary ramps meet standard ramp requirements & securely anchored?●Drop-off near accessible entrance?●Bus stop near accessible entrance? How near?●Walkways well-lit at night?●Slip-resistant surface?

Doors Is there a wheelchair accessible entrance? • Are there directions to the accessible entrances & descriptions of what that allows access to? • Minimum door clearance of at least 32"? • Operable by a single effort (no more than 8.5 lbs pressure for push or pull)? Pressure can be measured by looking at the pounds on a fish scale when initial force of pull is applied to open the door. Are doors automatic? • Do automatic doors work? • Thresholds flush with floor, or nearly so (no more than 1/4")? • Doormats stationary, flat or recessed (no more than 1/4" high)? • Wing handles, not knobs? 3 second closing delay? (When the door is fully open, is there at least a three second count to manoeuvre through the door before it closes?) Peephole or windows in doors reachable (no higher than 5')? • Locks no higher than 5'?

Elevators/Lifts Lifts differ from elevators because they are smaller & have no room for manoeuvrability. One tends to wheel on & wheel off without turning around. If the size does not fit the size requirements of an elevator, it should be considered a lift. Usually, lifts need constant pressure on the buttons to work & very often require a key. Do you have a lift? • Do you have an elevator? • Elevator size at least 5' X 5'? • Threshold no greater than 1/4"? • Doors open 36" wide? • Elevator & call buttons at a reasonable height (35" - 54" above floor)? • No obstructions in front of call buttons or elevator buttons? • Elevator & call buttons tactile? • Elevator & call buttons brailled? • Tactile braille to left of call buttons? • Tactile floor identification numbers at each elevator door (height of 54")? • Braille floor identification numbers at each elevator door (height of 54")? • Audible signals when elevator call is answered? • Audible signals for direction? • Handrails on three sides? • Handrails mounted 36" above floor? • Does it require a key? • Closing delay

(3 seconds or more)?●Electronic re-opening activators?

Stairs & Steps Is there a ramp nearby?●Do the stairs have a non-slip surface?●Tactile warning strips on stair edges?●Good lighting?●Continuous handrails?●Contrast lines on steps (top & bottom yellow, the rest white)?●Closed risers?●Maximum step height 7" & uniform?●Handrails extend 12" beyond top riser & bottom tread?●Handrails are 1 1/4" to 1 1/2" in diameter & easy to grasp?●Handrails in contrasting colour?●Tread size is at least 11"?●Suspended stairs provided with sufficient warning devices (planters or railings)?

Ramps Marked by access sign?●Gradient of 1:12? Note: This ratio means that there is 1 foot of climb for 12 feet of ramp●Interior ramp minimum width 36"?●Textured, non-slip surface?●Detectable warning surface?●Continuous & sturdy handrails?●Handrails 36" above ramp?●Handrails extend 12" beyond top & bottom of ramp?●Rest areas at less than 30' intervals?●Well-lit?

Hallways Fire doors have magnetic hold-opens?●Clear of obstacles?●Door edges painted contrasted colour as warning if door is slightly open?●Carpet tightly woven, non-static, level loop with direct glue-down?●All floors non-glare?●All floors non-slip?●Hallway obstructions that would not be detected by a cane (48" into passageway & 27" above the floor)?

Public Washrooms Signage to accessible washrooms?●Washroom entrance at least 36" wide?●At least one compartment with good internal clearance (5' X 5')? Does the compartment door swing outwards (clearance of 32")?●Does it have an inside door handle? Grab-bars installed (1" from wall; maximum 48" from floor)?●Coat hook & inside shelf inside cubicle not less than 40" high?●Wall-mounted wash-basin, or space provided under sink for wheelchair clear-

ance (30" wide X 20" deep X 28" high)?●Pipes wrapped to prevent burns?●Lowered mirror (39" from floor or tilted down)?●Lever-type faucets, not spring-loaded?●Towel dispensers at a reachable level (54" from floor) & location?

Assistive Listening Devices Audio Test - PA system (feedback; electrical interference or hum)?●Can speaker be easily heard from any place in room?●Acoustics check - Clap, is there an echo? Dead spots?●For acoustics - carpeting, padded tiles, upholstered seats? Adjust-able microphones available?●Low noise machines (Overhead fans are loud; turn off when not using)?●Infra-Red system?●FM system?●Minimal internal noise (Noisy heating/cooling system)?●Limited number of angles/ walls/ pillars to reduce sound bouncing?

Public Telephone Clear path width of 30"?●Located in a low ambient noise level area?●At least one accessible one in any bank of phones?●Handset & coin receiver within 48" of the floor?●Dial & coin slot 36"-48" from floor?●Cord minimum 29" long?●Phone directories kept at accessible level?●Shelf provided for TTY?●TTY?●Do the phones have volume controls?

Water Fountain Provided at varying heights?●Recessed so as not to cause obstruction?●Easy to operate?

Emergency System Emergency evacuation plan posted?●Does it fit requirements for accessible signage?●Audible alarm signals?●Visible alarm signals? Safe Haven (Refuge) area available, or accessible exit doors?●Are fire alarms within reach (5' from floor)?●Emergency doors clearly marked?●Crash (panic) bar on doors?●Visual alarm flashes no greater than 5 flashes/second?

So folks, please please *please* don't get yer knickers in a twist because some broke-ass gimp suggested yer spaces should *have* ramped stairs with an accessible bathroom of some kind (permanent or w/c accessible port-a-

two consequences of alienation are the obscuring of oppression & the elimination of real identity. nihilism is a form of alienation in its most desperate stage. suicide crime domestic violence alcoholism drug use conceal ones oppression from oneself...

MEANINGLESSNESS HOPELESSNESS LOVELESSNESS

...people dont feel this because we're "detached from reality" but because the realities of everyday life provide little reason to be hopeful or feel life has meaning or that you're loved.

[this is a reasonable response to poverty & powerlessness, isolation & degradation]

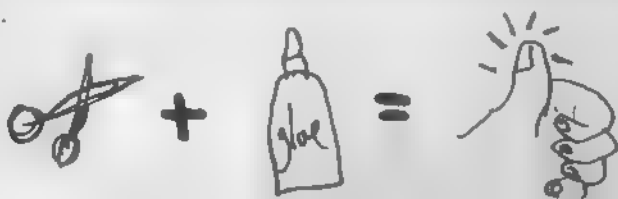
HOW TO MAKE yer AWESOME EVENT FLYER...well... AWESOME!—(Not for love of some drama, but because I love you & want tons of folks to show up & have a good time)

① Survey the space you're considering for yer fabulous soiree. Take measurements & photos if possible. Post this info community-wide for feedback.



② Write the info up or print it out. Cut it into cute-and-visually-accessible ways & paste it onto a piece of paper—get creative with the limited space*!

*note: you might have to leave out the beer info, so sad.



③ For maximum adorableness, paste yer web address, or other contact info so folks can get even more info about access & how to get involved & offer help/ideas

④ If you're feeling saucy, include the "NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US" logo I've included. Its kind of a gimpstamp for those of us who are tired of the old blue & white. Shake it up a little! Make yer own! (well ok it is home made .. so come up with some too!)

⑤ Post yer flyer where gimps might actually access them. This will win you major hurrahs (out loud or not) because it means we'll actually know about yer event, thereby increasing the likelihood that we'll attend, providing you with much needed bucks & hotness & word-of-mouth. You might not realize how often folks say "id be there in a second if it was accessible" & "holy crap its accessible too! That's awesome. It's gonna be so fun!", & "Wow i can totally offer ___insert skill here___ since it's accessible!"

⑥ Follow through on the access promises made on yer flyer. People get a weence pissy when theyre expecting to be able to get in & upon arriving are told some stuff has (oh noes!!!!) been changed.

③ For maximum adorableness, paste yer web address, or other contact info so folks can get even more info about access & how to get involved & offer help/ideas

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⑥ Follow through on the access promises made on yer flyer. People get a weence pissy when theyre expecting to be able to get in & upon arriving are told some stuff has (oh noes!!!!) been changed.

⑦ Repeat steps 2 through 6 every time you hold an event at this space, & steps 1 through 6 for every different space you use.

⑧ This isn't drudgery! have fun for goodness sake!

Things You'll Be Thinking About Including on Yer Flyer

Addy of course.

Stairs? How many? Where? Steep? Secure railings? How far apart? / Scent free? / Well lit? / Fat & gimp friendly seating? What kind? Any seating at all?? / Sliding scale? No one turned away policy? Child care /subsidies? / Bus routes? / W/c access wshrooms? Describe / Big-print flyers available alongside the smaller print ones? / On-site info provided in large-print, high-contrast colours? Well lit? / If w/c access is not in the main entrance, where is it? How do folks access it? Call out for folks to help with access/provide feedback/etc / Post pics of the space online if available

If the space isn't accessible:

Why? / Whats been done & continues to be done to change that? / How can people get involved in changing it? / What do you need? (Skills? Materials? Money? etc) / List what is & is not accessible / Call out for alternatives and/or a reworking of priorities

i saw this movie years ago about these german anarchists, squatting this old building & getting harassed & such & there was a dude in a wheelchair, & shit, he just worked out all these crazy awesome ways of getting around, of being part of his community & ways of fighting back. That's just how it was. There wasn't an expectation that anyone would do anything for him. He wasn't a hero-gimp or a genius gimp or a pitiful gimp. He just did what he had to do. (yes I know it was a movie...) So recently i was chatting with a friend (not disabled) about Q10 & they were telling me about their own experiences with this stuff in germany & how yeah when need be folks got together & just lifted folks in wheelchairs where they needed to go. It's just what they needed to do, y'know? It wasn't a slag on the person in the chair, it just was the reality of the situation. The reality of living in the spaces they were living in & their sense of community (though i'd be curious to know what those folks thought of it...). Anyways, i've been carried up & down stairs before. i don't dig it. Not because its humiliating, or degrading or embarrassing or unjust somehow, or that i'm somehow "above it" or some other fucked up classist bullshit, but because the people doing the carrying **don't have a clue what they're doing** & haven't taken the time to learn & because of that it is **fucking dangerous**. They haven't thought through that kind of thing, because it isn't part of an **ongoing process** of learning about this shit, of acknowledging & honouring the contributions of the folks they're carrying, and of just basic fricken physics. It's not community. Or love. **It's pity**. It's a last-second thought. There's a huge difference. Here are all these presumably amazing thoughtful creative energized people & because folks are busy defending themselves against being called out on their ableism, they can't get it together to find creative ways of dealing with shit (the response being that therefore calling folks out on this shit is the wrong thing to do because it stops them from being proactive blahblahblah)

My point is that there's a difference when you view gimps and fatties as an integral part of yer community. It makes a difference to the actions you take, to the ideas you come up with, to the lengths you'll go. & i think this stuff with Q10 is yet another **opportunity** to expand that stuff.

i still cant go to Q10, mainly because i don't have enough info about the sites. Meh. What can you do really? i **cant** go because of INaccessibility, but **choose** not to go because it's not just about INaccessibility, and it's not just about me. It's about INaccessability, racism, fatphobia, romanticization of poverty, exclusivity, cliquism and elitism.

i don't expect anyone to do shit for me (one example: a queeruptor wrote to me that it's not fair to expect a red-carpet, to expect everyone to do everything for me!), specially a bunch of generally brokeass queers. But i do hope that when i ask for information, and give my input on something these folks have said they know nothing about, that what i have to say will mean something to them. Will even maybe cause some shit to change. Maybe that's where i'm going wrong. i'm trying in other areas of life to not be so attached to the outcome of things. But when it comes to this stuff, the outcome is actually really important, y'know? Its important that folks like me can gain access to & be part of building these kinds of radical queer spaces. Its important to hear from folks like me, to hear our experiences, to take our contributions seriously & lovingly, just like anyone else's. It's important to feel to BE part of community. That's what i want. That's what i demand.

i demand it because i contribute everything i have to it. i demand it because just like you i have a goddamn right to some piece of space & time where i might feel part of that. i demand it because its who & what i am. i demand it because i offer the same thing in return, openly, lovingly, consistently. i want you to have my back as much as you expect it of me. But if when i turn around there's no one there because there's a big fucking

flight of stairs in the way? What might you expect of me (us) then? Where is it you think we'll be? How long do you think we'll wait there quietly? When will it be ok with you for us to start taking crowbars & matches to those stairs? You say you want community. You say you want direct action. But when folks routinely excluded from this community pursue direct action as a means of being part of this community or creating our own, you cry Drama! Division! Negativism! you say no!no!no!

But i say **yes!yes!yes!** more of that please! More matches! crowbars! sledgehammers! nails! screws! music! fucking! crying! learning! fucking up! & changing shit! **More of that please!**

"Gimp-for-a-day" doesn't work. "The-human-face-of-disability" doesn't work. "Do-it-yourself" (in the way y'all are describing & living it as it pertains to gimps & fatties) **does not work**. What works is community. What works is community. What works is community. Got it?

Now go on & get it the fuck on!



Love you. For reals.



* another great online resource:

<http://www.bentvoices.org/Archives/archiveblank.htm>

*

AVAILABLE IN LARGE-PRINT FORMAT

SOME RESOURCES on ABLEISM, ACCESS and COMMUNITY

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities

#204-456 w broadway, "Vancouver, b.c."
604 875 0188

Chronically Queer

Support/discussion group for lgbt gimps; meets 1st
and 3rd Thursday, 2-4pm (w/c accessible)
610-100 Davie St, "Vancouver"
604 684 8449

Building Accessibility Together

Education/outreach to raise awareness about queers
with disabilities, meets 2nd Thursday of the month,
2-4pm (w/c accessible)
610-100 Davie St, "Vancouver"
604 684 6548

Queer + Disability Online

<http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/QueerDisability>
http://www.community.livejournal.com/no_pity/
http://www.community.livejournal.com/dot_gimp_snark/
<http://www.community.livejournal.com/gimpypsex/>
<http://www.bigfatblog.com/>
http://www.disabilityhistory.org/links_new.html
<http://www.biodiverseresistance.blogspot.com/2007/07/disability-blog-carnival-sexuality.html>

*If you wanna tell me i'm full of beans, or you
hadn't thought of something or you relate or
don't, or would like to share yer writing, or
trade or whatever, feel free to contact me at
twobyfourboy@yahoo.ca*

Or write:

Box #7 1220 Salsbury Drive,
Coast Salish Territory, AKA "Vancouver, BC
Canada", V5L 4B2

comments, questions, recipes, trade:

Box #7 1220 Salisbury Dr.
Coast Salish Territory
(AKA "Vancouver, bc, Canada")
V5L 4B2

... and there's so much more to be said.